



FloorPrep

Legislative Digest

Monday, May 8, 2000

J.C. Watts, Jr.
Chairman
4th District, Oklahoma

*House Meets at 12:30 p.m. for Morning Hour
and 2:00 p.m. for Legislative Business
(No Votes Before 6:00 p.m.)*

Anticipated Floor Action:

H.R. 3577—Minidoka Reclamation Project

**H.Con.Res. 89—Recognizing the Hermann Monument and Hermann Heights
Park in New Ulm, Minnesota**

**H.Con.Res. 269—Expediting the Settlement of Discrimination Claims Against
the Department of Agriculture**

H.R. 1237—National Estuary Program Grants Bill

H.R. 3069—Southeast Federal Center Public-Private Development Act

H.R. 3313—Long Island Sound Restoration Act

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Bills Considered Under Suspension of the Rules

Floor Situation: The House will consider the following six bills under suspension of the rules as its first order of business today. Each is debatable for 40 minutes, may not be amended, and requires a two-thirds majority vote for passage.

H.R. 3577 increases the amount to be appropriated for the north side pumping division of the Minidoka reclamation project in Idaho. The existing well field, which is used for project drainage, is being closed to improve the underlying aquifer. Minidoka Dam is a combined diversion, storage, and power structure located just south of Minidoka, Idaho. The North Side Pumping Division consists of some 77,000 acres of irrigable public land. The A & B Irrigation District, (operating agency of the North Side Pumping Division) in conjunction with the Bureau of Reclamation, has undertaken a program to enhance wetlands. The purpose of this program is to address the quality of runoff, both natural and irrigation return flows, which are injected into the aquifer by drainage wells, and to provide wildlife habitat and to allow reuse. Wetlands naturally filter water as it flows through the vegetation and provides a mechanism

for increased natural recharge. Several wetland projects are completed and others are on-going. CBO estimates that implementing this bill would increase discretionary spending by about \$2.5 million over the 2001-2005 period. The bill was introduced by Mr. Simpson on February 3, 2000 and was reported by the Resources Committee by voice vote on April 5, 2000.

H.Con.Res. 89 recognizes the Hermann Monument and Hermann Heights Park in New Ulm, Minnesota, as a national symbol of the contributions of Americans of German decent. Currently, more than 60 million individuals of German heritage reside in the United States, comprising 25 percent of the U.S. population, and constitute the largest ethnic group in the United States. The bill was introduced by Mr. Minge on April 20, 1999 and was reported from the Resources Committee on March 15, 2000.

H.Con.Res. 296 calls for whatever resources necessary be committed to expediting the settlement process concerning claims of racism perpetrated on African-American farmers by the U.S. Department of Agriculture so that these claims can be resolved as quickly as possible. Furthermore, the resolution expresses the sense of Congress that the Attorney General and Secretary of Agriculture should strictly follow the consent decree issued in the discrimination case. At press time a CBO cost estimate was not available. The bill was introduced by Mr. Dickey on March 30, 2000 and was not considered by a committee.

H.R. 1237 amends the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to authorize grants under the National Estuary Program (NEP). The grants will be used to fund activities related to developing and implementing a comprehensive conservation and management plan (CCMP) for designated estuaries. The bill authorizes \$50 million per year for the NEP during the years FY 2000-2004. Under the bill NEP funds may be used to cover no more than 75 percent of the yearly costs of developing a CCMP, and no more than 50 percent of the yearly aggregate costs of implementing the CCMP. The rest of the funds must be provided by a non-federal source.

The bill also adds new estuaries to the list of the original 16 that have been granted priority consideration. These are the Lake Ponchartrain Basin in Louisiana and Mississippi, and the Mississippi Sound, Mississippi. CBO estimates that implementing this legislation would increase discretionary spending by \$157 million over the 2000-2005 period. The bill was introduced by Mr. Saxton on March 23, 1999 and was from the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee by voice vote on April 5, 2000.

H.R. 3069 authorizes the Administrator of General Services (GSA) to enter into agreements with private entities to acquire, construct, rehabilitate, maintain or use facilities located on the Southeast Federal Center located in Washington, D.C. The bill requires any such agreement to be consistent with the objectives of a plan outlined by the National Capital Planning Commission. It requires the Administrator to report to specified congressional committees before entering into a final agreement. In addition, the measure requires a 30-day waiting period after such submission before the agreement may become effective. Any proceeds under an agreement are to be deposited into the Federal Buildings Fund established under the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949. CBO cost estimate was unavailable at press time. The bill was introduced by Mr. Franks and was reported by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure by voice vote on March 23, 2000.

H.R. 3313 reauthorizes funding for the Long Island Sound program and authorizes up to \$80 million per year for grants and studies to implement the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) for fiscal years 2000-2003. The bill also requires EPA's Long Island Sound Office to assist and support a

nitrogen credit trading program (to meet a 58.5 percent nitrogen load reduction in a cost-effective manner) and any other cost-effective measures consistent with the CCMP. This assistance and support is to be provided under the existing authorities for the Clean Water Act, the laws of New York and Connecticut, and any other amendments to such authorities or laws. In addition, the bill authorizes states to provide additional financial relief to designated distressed communities from a state's clean water state revolving fund. This additional subsidy may include forgiveness of principal loans. The total amount of loan subsidies made by a state may not exceed 30 percent of the amount of the capitalization grant received by the state for the year. CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 3313 will cost \$237 million through FYs 2000-2005. The bill was introduced by Ms. Johnson on November 10, 1999.

Additional Information: See *Legislative Digest*, Vol. XXIX, #12, May 5, 2000.

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